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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Admiral Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

O God of new beginnings, giver of gifts and architect of opportunities, You ride the wings of the wind and even our secret thoughts are visible to Your eyes. Before we speak, You hear. And before we call, You answer.

Lord, in the stillness of this moment, we thank You for Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie's ministry. May his legacy of faithfulness continue to bless us.

Today deliver us from insulating privilege that obscures humanity's needs. As the Senate meets, give these leaders the gift of discernment that they will know what matters most and approve what is excellent. May they remember that with many advisors, there is safety.

Lord, protect and sustain our troops in harm's way.

Accept this our prayer in the name of the One who fills our hearts with peace. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TED STEVENS, a Senator from the State of Alaska, lead the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today the Senate returns from the Fourth of July recess, and I do hope everybody had a

safe and restful period. As I announced before the recess, there will be no rollcall votes during today's session. The next scheduled rollcall votes will begin tomorrow at 11:45 a.m.

The first vote will be on the confirmation of David Campbell to be a U.S. District Judge for Arizona. The second vote will be invoking cloture on the nomination of Victor Wolski to be a judge for the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

I would like to take a minute or two to talk about this month's schedule. We are now entering a very busy legislative session for the Senate. There is much work to be done, and we have only 4 weeks to do that. One major focus for the Senate this month will be the appropriations process. Senator STEVENS will be working hard to prepare the spending bills for floor action, and we will be scheduling these for floor action throughout the month.

In addition, this month we will complete consideration and passage of the Energy bill. Both consideration and passage will be before the August recess. I am committed, along with Chairman DOMENICI, to pass an energy bill that will enhance our country's national energy security. There are many remaining amendments, as we all know, to debate and dispose of, but I do want to be clear: We must pass a bill as soon as possible to establish a clear national energy policy which will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Third, we have a lot of remaining work to do on executive nominations, especially judicial nominations. I urge my colleagues again to allow the Senate to work its will on these nominations and give them an up-or-down vote. I will continue to schedule consideration of nominations as they become available with the hope that we can move forward and give the individuals their due process. Advice and consent means allowing Senators an up-or-down vote on the President's nominations.

Fourth, today we will begin to address the crisis of medical liability. Prior to the recess we attempted to reach consent to begin consideration of S. 11, the Patients First Act of 2003. We are in desperate need of medical liability reform in this country, and now is the time for us to act. Unfortunately, there was an objection prior to the recess to proceeding to this bill. Today if we are unable to reach that consent, it would be my intent to move to proceed to that bill and file cloture on the motion if that is necessary. If that is the case, the vote would occur on Wednesday of this week. Senator MCCONNELL will be here later this afternoon to discuss the medical malpractice crisis.

Also this week we will consider other authorization measures, including the State Department authorization. Chairman LUGAR has indicated the bill will be ready for the floor this week. We hope we will be able to complete action on this important bill in a day or two.

These are just a few of the issues we will be addressing during this legislative session. A lot of that will be done this week. To get our work done, it is going to take the cooperation of all Senators. We will schedule these items for consideration from Monday through Friday. Having said that, I alert Members they should prepare for full days of voting that includes Mondays and especially Fridays. That includes this Friday. Senators should arrange their schedules accordingly and plan to be here in the Senate each day of the week unless I specifically say we are not having votes.

I do want to thank my colleagues for their attention and look forward to work together with them in a collaborative way in what will be a very busy 4 weeks.

I yield the floor.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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